Withdrawing - Disorderly

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READERS EXCHANGE

The Church of Christ in Trent is a sweet group. We have a good relationship with the Methodists and Baptists. Attitudes toward each other have changed for the good. This began about the time that the three preachers began to get together. The three churches even had one or two union assemblies last year. It is a shame to have three churches of about 65 each in this town of 333. But maybe opportunities for fellowship are better, although the building waste is great. – *George Butterfield, Box 147, Trent, Texas 79561*

I am now a member of the most successfully integrated Church of Christ in Houston. What can we do with other congregations without our members feeling out of place. In this city, in fact in this nation, there are two separate Churches of Christ, one white and one black. In 1975 there were two major lectureships in Texas, one 99% white and one 99% black. There are two separate singing programs in this city. In the few months that I have been reading your paper I have seen you speak out on many things. I have been in complete agreement with you most of the time. I have not seen you speak out on the racial problems in our congregations. How can we as the so-called "Body of Christ" lead people to Christ if we are divided? We preach the one church when we are really two. –*Wayne McVey, 6002 Belcrest, Houston, Texas 77033*

(We have in the not distant past had considerable to say about the sin of racism, especially in drawing upon expeciences while teaching in a black college. We have sent our brother a fistful of these back issues. But his point is nonetheless well made. A divided church is always wrong, a contradiction in fact, for the true Body of Christ cannot, by its very nature, be other than one. All our writings along this line are generally applicable to the *sin* of division, whether it takes racial form or some other form. That there are in fact *two* Churches of Christ in Texas, one white and one black, shows that we have been influenced by our culture rather than the other way around. – *Ed.)*

RESTORATION REVIEW

Leroy Garrett, Editor

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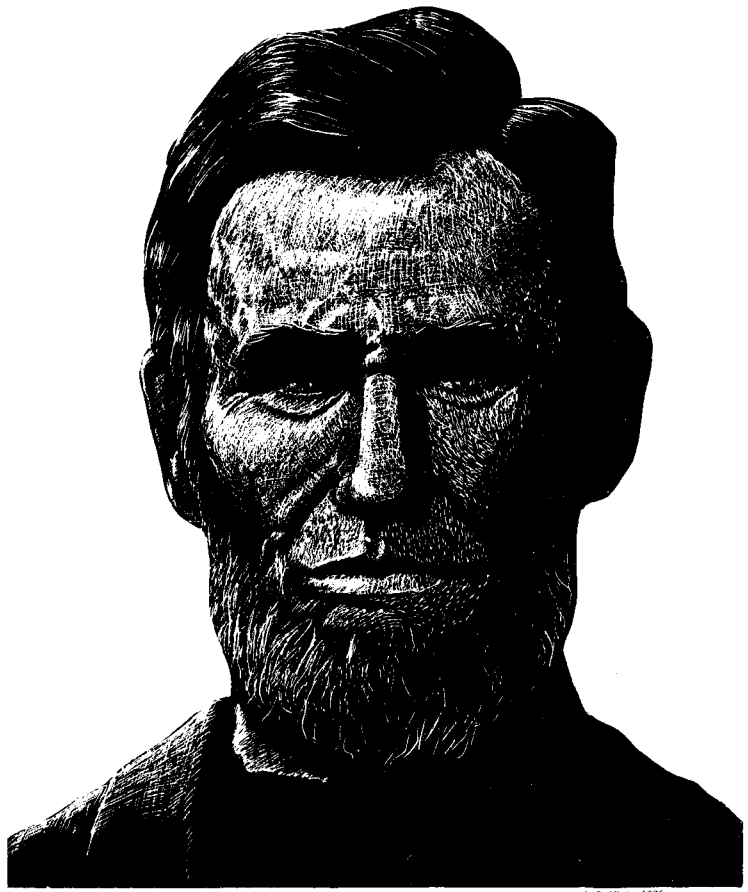

As I would not be a *slave,* so I would not be a *master.*
– Abraham Lincoln

The Word Abused . . .

WITHDRAWING FROM THE DISORDERLY

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. —2 Thess. 3:6, KJV

The apostle Paul was having an odd kind of problem with the believers in Thessalonica. In one manner of speaking they were *over converted.* So wrapped up were they in the expectation of an early return of Jesus from the heavens that they no longer bothered with the "business as usual" kind of existence. Since the Lord was due to come just any moment, so they presumed, they had quit their jobs and ceased all work. After all, if God is going to ring down the curtain and bring an end to it all, why bother to cultivate the crops, report to your foreman on Monday morning, or enroll the kids in school?

Had Jesus come all that soon there would have been no problem. But as he tarried the weeds continued to grow, work around the house piled up, and stomachs began to growl with hunger. While they were waiting (and surely it could not be much longer!) it was convenient for them to live off other believers, whose conversion had not led them to such a radical change in day-to-day living. They, too, believed in the Lord's coming, but they continued to stack up the firewood, cultivate their crops, and report for work as usual. They were like the presiding elder of an assembly of divines in New England when heavy clouds moved in over the area, darkening their procedures. Some of the clergy cried out that it must surely be the end of the world, that the Lord Himself is at hand. The elder calmed his fellows and called for the candles to be lighted. "If the Lord comes, he assured them, it is just as well that he find us at work."

Such a problem is intensified if people are inclined toward indolence anyway, as most of us probably are. I'm always looking for good excuses to escape some of my inevitable tasks! Some of the Thessalonians had this problem, and what is a better excuse than the world's sudden demise? Why chop wood if nobody will be around to cram it into the cook stove? Why bother with preparing meals since we will at any moment be caught up in the air? In the meantime, if there is a delay tactic on the Lord's part, we can always drop in on the Smiths and have a meal with them, and while we are there we can borrow a leg of lamb, just in case the Lord keeps postponing the big event. That the situation was something like this at Thessalonica is evident from what Paul writes to them in the first letter, which apparently did not have the effect he intended.

Williams renders 1 Thess. 4:11 this way: "Try hard to live quietly, and mind your own business, and work with your hands, as we told you." The Jerusalem Bible puts it: "Make a point of living quietly, attending to your own business and earning your living, just as we told you to." The first letter is filled with teaching about the second coming, with at least one reference to it in each chapter. In both letters the point is made that, while Jesus will indeed come again, they are not to be so disturbed about it as to make normal living difficult or impossible. "Let no one mislead you," he urges, and goes on to assure them that certain things must take place before the Lord comes, such as the great rebellion and the appearance of the man of sin. And so in 1 Thess. 5:14 he includes in his list of admonitions: *We urge you to warn the idle.*

But Paul goes even further. Not only does he warn against idleness and indolence, whether they use the second coming as a reason or not, but he even demands that *If a man will not work, he shall not eat* (2 Thess. 3:10). He tells them that he himself was an example for them in this regard, for while in their midst he took on one's food without paying his part, even though he had the right to expect them to provide his necessities (verses 7-8).

Now we have the context for this terribly abused passage before us. In 2 Thess. 3:6 he is talking about these people who will not work and who go around sponging off other people. This violates his own example as well as his instructions. The *King James* rendering, "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." is improved upon in other versions, though this version is clear enough when the entire paragraph is studied. In v. 8 the apostle tells them that he did not "behave disorderly" in that he worked and was chargeable to no one. Verse 11 identifies the disorderly as those who "work not at all, but are busybodies."

Other versions make verse 6 even clearer. Phillips has it: "Dont associate with the brother whose life is undisciplined." and the *Revised Standard* puts it: "keep away from any brother who is living in idleness." The *New English*: "Hold aloof from every Christian brother who falls into idle habits," while Williams gives it as: "Avoid any brother who is living a lazy life."

The apostle is obviously dealing with a very special problem. Using the coming of Christ as a reason, some of them no doubt sincerely, a number had turned to a life of idleness and indolence, which not only made for an imposition upon others who were poor to start with, but which also violated the principles and example that Paul had set before them. Some strong measure had to be applied. So he is telling the faithful to avoid or hold aloof those who refuse to work and bear their own load. *When they come around, don't let them impose on you, don't feed them. Put a hoe or an ax in their hand and let them work for what they eat.* This is what he is telling them.

That this has no reference to any kind of formal withdrawing of fellowship is evident by the context. Paul did not want these people run off. He wanted them to get on the stick and get to work. His final word on the subject is in 2 Thess. 3: 14-15 where he says, "If anyone refuses to obey our orders in this letter, note that man; have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed of himself; but do not consider him an enemy; warn him as a brother." The brother who

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would not heed the apostle's urgings was to be kept at bay. They were not to associate with him nor in any way encourage his prodigality, including turning him away from the door at mealtime. This might lead the brother to shame and get him back in line. Paul never really touches upon the subject of excluding such ones from the fellowship of the congregation, as he does, for instance, in the case of the fornicator at Corinth. Such idle ones might well have shown up in the assemblies at Thessalonica, for, after all, they were suppose to be standing by, waiting for Jesus to come. The apostle does not deal with this part of the problem, except to tell the faithful to "warn him as a brother." So they kept on treating them as *brothers.* I can hear one of them say to such an erring one, "Andy, I'll be up early plowing in the morning and I surely could use some help. When the day is over, we'll have a sack of food ready for you to take to your family." Or Mary might invite Ruth over for a quilting or a cooking spree, after which the spoils would be divided. But they would avoid them or hold them aloof insofar as they sought to impose their idle ways upon others.

So, the passage isn't really all that involved, is it? It emerges in Paul's writings only because of this sticky problem in that small, persecuted, poverty-stricken congregation in Thessalonica. Paul could never have dreamed that his words, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." would someday be used as a prooftext for "withdrawing fellowship" from those who veer from this or that doctrinal position, whether in reference to a divorce, speaking in tongues, importing an organ, becoming a Mason, conducting a Sunday School, using uninspired literature, adopting the pastor system, or supporting a TV-radio program through the treasury of the church.

It is common for our bulls of excommunication, those letters of "disfellowship" that make the rounds, to begin with a quotation of this passage. "In view of the apostle's injunction to withdraw fellowship from all those who walk disorderly we do hereby. . ." may well be the language. Somebody, sometimes an entire congregation, gets the ax, and 2 Thess. 3:6 is the prooftext. Any person who breaks rank with what might well be called "Church of Christism" is said to be walking disorderly and comes under the indictment of 2 Thess. 3:6. Pat Boone began to "walk disorderly," not while sipping cocktails at Hollywood parties, but when he began to speak in tongues. A congregation is said to be "walking disorderly" when it invites "liberal" preachers or allows women to conduct seminars.

We have seen that Paul really never said anything about "walking disorderly" to start with, but something like *living in idleness.* But even if we take that term and apply it to some behavior in the scriptures, which would surely be *disorderly,* if anything would, it does not necessarily bear any such penalty as we seek to impose upon 2 Thess. 3:6. Take Gal. 6:7 where Paul refers to a brother being "overtaken in a trespass," which is surely *disorderly* conduct. But there is no reference to withdrawing from him, but of restoring him in a spirit of gentleness. There was a great deal at Corinth that was *disorderly,* such as taking each other to court and having assemblies that were confusing and unedifying, but the apostle did not relate this to withdrawing of fellowship.

We *all* walk disorderly in one way or another, just as we are all wrong or "brothers in error" in one way or another. It is a matter of intention and the condition of the heart as to how serious these errors are. What really counts is our faithfulness to Jesus. If we lift him up in our lives, yielding ourselves to his example and to the scriptures the best we know how, then our feebleness, our disorderly moments in act and thought, our errors of judgment and behavior will be covered by his love and grace. If this is not the way of it, then we may as well call the whole thing off, for all our works, even those "done in righteousness," are for naught. It is only by his mercy that we are saved, not by orderliness of doctrine and practice.

—Editor

Bicentennial Notes on Restoration History . . .

JOHN T. JOHNSON, ENVOY OF EVANGELISM AND UNITY

John T. Johnson holds an important place in the history of our Movement for several reasons. Already in this series we have seen that he was instrumental in bringing about the union of the Disciples and the Christians (Stoneites, so-called) in 1832 in Lexington, Ky. He was then living in Gerogetown, Ky., where Barton W. Stone was his neighbor. Johnson, representing the Campbell movement, carried on his own little unity meetings with Stone, and finally, with the help of Raccoon John Smith and others, a union was achieved between the two restoration groups.

Johnson is also important to us because of the close asociation he had with the earliest pioneers of the Movement. Born the same year as Alexander Campbell (1788), he was contemporary with and fellow-worker with both the Campbells, Barton W. Stone, Raccoon John Smith, Jacob Creath, Benjamin Franklin, and John Gano, to name but a few. J. W. McGarvey was at his bedside when he died. He was co-editor with Campbell in the hymnal that went through many editions, and he joined Stone as co-editor of his journal, as a symbol of their newly found unity. He also helped Benjamin Franklin edit his *Monthly Review.* He assisted Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, well known as our first "liberal," in starting a school for girls. He also worked with Walter Scott and D. S. Burnett in their publications. He was certainly a man who got around and one who could easily work with others. His life's work touched the Movement at virtually every turn in the road.

His significance in our history lay primarily in his success as an evangelist. He was often referred to as "the evangelist of Kentucky," and his effectiveness was phenomenal. He averaged immersing 50 people a month for a period of 25 years, which totals 15,000 souls. In a meeting in Richmond, Virginia he went two weeks without a single response, but as he

continued a few more days 55 came forward to be immersed. It was not uncommon for him to baptize 70 or 80 people in a single protracted meeting. In his only visit to Bethany to visit with Campbell (1847) the college students were on vacation, but of the few that were there he immersed six of them. This led Campbell to theorize in the next issue of his *Millenial Harbinger* as to "the secret" of Johnson's effectiveness. "The great secret of brother Johnson's great success," he wrote, "is his evident sincerity, honesty, and great earnestness." He wrote also of his good sense and clear perception of the facts and promises of the gospel. He described him as being "plain, clear and emphatic." Benjamin Franklin explained the evangelist's effectiveness by saying that he was able to inspire confidence and hope more than any man he had ever known.

He certainly led an eventful life. Educated at Transylvania University, he was admitted to the bar when only 21. Two years later he took 15-year old Sophia Lewis to be his bride, and then settled on a farm in Georgetown. He was an aide to General Harrison, who later became president, in the War of 1812. He was in fact shot while standing near the general, an incident that caused Harrison to speak personally of his heroism. He served for almost a decade as a representative of the people of Kentucky, first in the state legislature and then in Congress.

His confidence in the will of the people is reflected in his vote for Andrew Jackson to be president. Since the popular vote was not decisive, it had to be determined by the House of Representatives. The vote was very close, Jackson winning by a mere four votes. Johnson bypassed his own Kentucky-favorite, Henry Clay, to cast his vote for Jackson. This he did because Jackson was the people's choice, and he thought the voters should be trusted. He later referred to this as the proudest act of his life.

In the meantime he became a rather wealthy man through real estate holdings, but he lost most of it in the financial crisis of 1819. This was not because of his own debts, but because his trust of others led him to sign more of their notes than he should have.

All these years "Major" Johnson, as he was called, was a layman in the Baptist Church in Gerogetown. He tells of how he came to be affected by the teaching of Alexander Campbell.

> The public mind was much excited in regard to what was vulgarly called Campbellism, and I resolved to examine it in light of the Bible. I was won over, and contended for it with all my might in the private circle. I was astonished at the ignorance and perversity of learned men who were reputed pious and otherwise esteemed honorable. My eyes were opened and I was made perfectly free by the truth. And the debt of gratitude I owe to that man of God, Alexander Campbell, no language can tell.
>
> (Richardson, Memoirs, p. 381)

Old Jacob Creath, Sr. was pastor of the church where Johnson was a member. He was present when Creath made his defense before the leaders for his leanings toward Campbellism, which was no doubt instrumental in bringing about his own change. It shows once more how the Campbell movement first emerged among reformation-minded Baptists.

Johnson set out to reform the Baptist church he had attended as a boy, in Cross Creek, Ky., but ended up starting a congregation of his own, after the primitive order, once his

efforts with the Baptists proved futile. He was still practicing law, but was becoming more and more interested in the Lord's work.

It was about this time that he first met Alexander Campbell. He had asked Campbell to give a discourse at his congregation. Campbell himself describes the occasion, how, after the discourse, he invited the major to go walking with him in the yard around the meetinghouse. "Brother Johnson, you are aware that the Baptists are occasionally wont to say that they sometimes 'feel a deep and solemn impression on their minds'," he said to the lawyer, now 42 years old. " I now feel such an impression on my mind, and it is concerning not myself but you." There was quiet for a moment as they paused in the churchyard. "And what is it?," asked Johnson. Campbell measured the man with his piercing eyes and said, "It is that you should abandon politics and the law, and go and preach the gospel."

Campbell goes on to tell how he was passing through Georgetown a few months later and inquired of a brother as to how things were going. The brother replied, "Nothing remarkable, save that John T. Johnson has given up politics and is now preaching the gospel." It was a great day in the history of the Movement when that happened.

Johnson always had great appreciation for Campbell, and it vexed his soul that Campbell had to suffer so much calumny. The evangelist insisted that Campbell's name would live on and that he would be appreciated by succeeding generations, while those of his opponents would soon be forgotten. He was especially impressed with Campbell's part of the debate with Rice:

> If ever gigantic powers of mind were exhibited, they were manifested by Alexander Campbell in that discussion in Lexington. The debate will hand his name down to posterity as one of God's most gifted sons. His goodness and greatness will outlive all the malice of his enemies. His fame defies the insidious attacks of envy. And the mighty work he has accomplished will constitute one of the greenest spots in the world's history, when his opponents are dead and forgotten. (Biography of John T. Johnson, p. 241)

It is obvious that he felt a debt of gratitude to the Sage of Bethany for all the light he had brought into his life and for encouraging him to be an evangelist. "Thank the Lord that your writings ever fell in my way! I shall ever feel the debt of gratitude that you taught me how to read the Bible, the book of the lord. It imparts to me a happiness that no language can tell," he once wrote. Another time he wrote: "Your triumphs are recorded and your riches are in the heavens!"

It is interesting that one of the first things that impressed Campbell about John T. Johnson was the way he gave thanks at the table. But in later years he was to say much more about the former Congressman: "He is one of the most laborious, useful, exemplary and successful evangelists in America."

The artist who painted the gallery of pioneer preachers, which presently hangs at our historical society in Nashville, caught the significance of John T. Johnson. He depicts Thomas Campbell serving the Lord's Supper, which is appropriate. Alexander Campbell, Robert Richardson, and Walter Scott are standing in a central place before an open Bible. Isaac Errett and W.K. Pendleton also have conspicuous places.

And where does he place Johnson? He stands in the most prominent place of all, out in front of the entire gallery. He is baptizing!

"I feel the spirit of evangelizing burning within me!" aptly reveals the heart of this unusual man. His biographer, John Rogers lists some of the reports he sent in from the field, published in various papers. They seem unreal to those of us living in the 1970's. There were 30 additions in Charleston, Indiana . . . 32 in May's Lick, Ky. . . . 50 in Jeffersonville near Louisville . . . 52 in Mt. Sterling, Ky. . . . 77 at still another place. On and on it goes. By 1840 there were 30,000 Disciples in Kentucky alone, according to Johnson's count, and 200,000 altogether. It was his zeal that set the pace of growth.

There was a sense of urgency in his message. He was a no-nonsense preacher, always placing one great question before the hearer: *Will you choose God as your Ruler or the Devil?* It was common for him, like Campbell, to lift up Jesus by showing the relationship between the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian eras. He had a way of crying out, "Oh, let the goodness of God lead you to repentance – the dying love of the Savior reconcile you to God!" Above all, he was a tireless worker and his commitment to the Cause infused him with inexhaustible energy. His biographer says he spoke with the vigor of a man of 30 while in his 60's.

And he always had a passion for the unity of God's people upon earth. His reports from the field would sometime express the hope that he might unite the entire town on the basis of the primitive faith. We have seen that his own unity meetings with Barton Stone set the stage for the union of the Stone and Campbell movements. Ten years after that he arranged still another unity meeting in Lexington, and this time all the sects were invited to gather and discuss the possible basis of unity. He persuaded Campbell to be present, who was not present at the first one. A large crowd gathered, including representatives from several sects, especially Baptists. Johnson insisted that the meeting be conducted in all good feeling, free of any harsh remarks, and that everyone be free to take part in the discussions.

The influencial Baptist leader, W.F. Broaddus, a lifetime antagonist of Campbell, was present, even though he urged the Baptists to stay away. He was asked to speak to the question of the basis of unity, but he chose to be silent. That caused Campbell to describe him as "a silent spectator," but he hoped he might experience what Goldsmith spoke of – "some who came to scorn remain'd to pray."

There was something especially unusual about that unity meeting. They decided to pass a resolution in reference to the grounds on which the church could be one. It was a disarming resolution, one that should have set the likes of W.F. Broaddus to thinking. It read:

> Resolved, That the union of Christians can be scripturally effected by requiring a practical acknowledgment of such articles of belief and such rules of piety and morality as are admitted by all Christian denominations.

This is a neat way of pointing out that we all tend to agree on the universals of the Christian faith, such as the one Lord, the one faith, and the one baptism. We can unite on what we *admit* to be necessary to the faith. It is the particulars, especially our own opinions and theological speculations, that keep us separated.

John T. Johnson is significant for the 1970's. We can use both his evangelistic zeal and his passion for unity. He was a man of action as well as ideas. He stands as an illustrious example of what one man can do. And he was willing to make the sacrifice to do it. Is it *that* that distinguishes him from most of us who profess the same faith? – *the Editor*

Pilgrimage of Joy. . .

MEETIN' HOUSE RELIGION

W. Carl Ketcherside

It has long been a thesis of mine that those who are not formally educated tend to preserve the wisdom gained by experience in easily-remembered proverbs. When any situation arises which demands comment, one of these capsules can be prescribed, and it will quickly put life into proper perspective. Our mother, having grown up in an emigrant colony, had a "saying" for every behavioral problem. She even made us clean up the food on our plates by quoting, "Willful waste makes woeful want."

Sometimes her proverbs were contradictory, a fact which did not trouble her in the least. If someone we knew moved around from pillar to post and did not hold a job she was ready with "A rolling stone gathers no moss." But if another was too content to toil away interminably at the same ill-paying task she nailed him with, "A setting hen grows no feathers." In spite of our poverty and the difficulty of survival she maintained our morale and boosted her own hope by constant repetition of the old cliche, "It's a long road that has no turn in it." We had been on the road of life going from bad to worse long enough. So a slight bend in the road came in sight.

Our father, who had tried everything that was honest to eke out a living in Chillicothe, including becoming a "Watkin's man," selling household products, had meanwhile been helping rural and village congregations everywhere within range. He received a letter from Pike County, Illinois, asking him to come and conduct a couple of brief meetings and, imbued with a desire to preach the gospel, he went, after arranging with a good storekeeper to supply our needs "on time." We received enthusiastic letters from him. The meetings were going well. He was baptizing a number of people. He wanted us to see the area.

That is how we happened to move into the rural area in Illinois, called Old Pearl, where I was privileged to attend a one-room country school for a few months. It must have been a growing settlement at one time, but when the railroad went through almost three miles away, a new Pearl sprang up on the Illinois River, and the old one was stopped "dead in its tracks."

We bought a ten acre orchard and our place was in full view of the schoolhouse and the "church building." The two of them stood side by side. In every direction, along roads which were dusty in dry weather and "shoe-mouth deep" in mud in rainy weather, stretched larger farms. The pastures were watered by gently-flowing creeks and the timbered portions were the shelters for every kind of native wild animals.

It was evident, from the very outset, that we were "back home" again. The friendly, helpful and humble people were our kind of folk. In an earlier day, this broad sweep of prairie leading toward the steep bluffs which stood like a frowning fortress above the Illinois River bottom-land, had been inhabited by sturdy Anglo-Saxons with names like Willard, Jackson, Johnson and Calvin, and others betokening the trades of original ancestors, such as Miller, Wheeler, Draper and Waggoner. Generally hard-working, frugal and neighborly they received us with open arms. At the very outset, they had a homemade ice cream party for us to which they brought not only well-filled freezers, but all kinds of food staples – sugar, flour, home-canned vegetables and fruits, smokehouse hams and bacon. We had never seen such a supply of food, and when they all left our mother cried unashamedly, while the rest of us stood and looked at the huge stockpile while still shivering from the ice cream with which they had regaled us.

Every school district in the area had a "Church of Christ." A few congregations met in the local schoolhouse, but most of them had erected plain structures in which to meet. Older preachers like "Uncle Henry Maynard" and "Uncle George Williams" had taken the plea that one could be a "Christian only" into the region round about, until there was a group of saints meeting about every three to five miles in every direction. Many of the people did not know there was any other kind of "a church." They supposed that all who were not unbelievers "spoke where the Bible spoke and remained silent where the Bible was silent." There was no apparent rivalry. When one congregation had a "big meeting" all attended it and the house was filled to overflowing, many of the men having to remain out in the yard and listen to the message through the open windows.

No congregation had a "hired preacher." The term "local minister" was not in their vocabulary. The "one-man imported pastor system" was regarded as an innovation. It was a departure from the simplicity of the faith. It was not according to the ancient order. Each congregation had elders and no one was appointed to this function who was not "apt to teach." These men were not ambitious for power and glory. They shared the public edification with any man who was gifted at all. Each Lord's Day, as Sunday was invariably designated, after the study of the lesson, one of the elders would say, "Is there any brother who has a word of exhortation? If so, an opportunity will now be given for it." Sometimes three men would speak briefly in turn. If a visiting brother was present he was specifically invited to speak. If no one arose to speak one of the elders was prepared to teach and admonish.

As I look back upon those days there comes to my mind the mental image of toil-worn men sitting on the front porch at dusk, reading the sacred volume. I recall being in homes on cold wintry days where men who had spent hours feeding and doing the chores, now sat down close to the heating-stove to study the Bible, until the warmth stole over their bodies and lulled them to sleep while the book slid gently to the floor. Since I had been completely through the Bible at least twice, when some remote point was "brought up in the meeting" the teacher might refer it to me. Frequently I knew the answer. This did two things. It drew the commendation of the older folk and strengthened the resolution of the males who were my age to beat me up, the age-old and effective recourse of country boys to a "smart city kid."

A passage from the Roman letter keeps coming to my mind."I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another." I think that may describe the way we were. No one threw his weight around. The brethren were tolerant of one another. When old "Pappy Davis" decided it was not "scriptural" to stand for prayer, no one was upset if he kneeled while we stood. When he was called upon to lead in prayer, the one who was presiding asked us all to kneel.

There was a cooperative spirit. The sisters took a month each in preparing the loaf for the Lord's Supper, and shared their recipe for making unleavened bread. We used two glasses to pass the fruit of the vine, and during a protracted meeting when a lot of visitors were present we added two more. Near the close of the service, while a hymn was being sung, everyone marched up and "laid by in store" by putting his money on the white linen cloth on the table. Before returning to their seats they shook hands with everyone on the front seat. There was a lack of pride and affection which contributed to the idea that it was a family reunion of the saints of God.

Because we had moved in the middle of the term I finished the year in the little schoolhouse where eight grades were crowded together in one room. There was a "recitation bench" in front and the teacher called each class to come in turn and occupy that seat while its members recited whatever lesson was scheduled. By the time one reached the eighth grade he had heard every textbook reviewed eight times. Although I was destined to attend but a few months, that little school, taught by Lee Carter Maynard, made an indelible impression upon my mind.

Two significant things happened soon after we moved into the new community. The first was that my mother began to attend the meetings of the congregation. I am sure she had been lonely, but here she was accepted, and the genuine concern of the other women made her want to be with them. She told us it represented no change upon her part and that she simply went to be with the rest of the family, but she was talking to herself as much as to us.

The second thing was my decision one Sunday to be baptized into Christ. I was sitting in my accustomed place with the other boys of the community. Nothing unusual was occurring. The songs were not more inspiring. The short talk by one of the elders was a routine one. But there came to me, out of nowhere a feeling of deep depression and remorse that I had not

audibly confessed before men my faith in Jesus. Suddenly I knew that he had not just died for sin, but for *my sins.* There was a tugging at my inward being to enroll in His service. It was as if I were receiving a clear summons to follow His leading.

After the meeting was over I hurried away home. I did not want to talk to anyone. I felt miserable. I could not eat luncheon and as soon as I could steal away I went to one of my favorite spots for meditating, under the shade of one of the apple trees in a remote corner of the orchard. All afternoon I sat there, inwardly presenting the consequences of acceptance or rejection. It was as if two forces inside me were locked in violent struggle. Two voices were calling out of the depths. Finally, I surrendered to the urging of the Spirit, and at once felt an inner peace and quiet I had never before known. It was as if a heavy rock had been lifted off my being. That night, unaware that I was bare foot and dressed in bib overalls, I confessed to the little group of humble farm-folk that I believed with all my heart that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

One week from that time, on a sun-drenched Sunday afternoon, we gathered at the old swimming-hole in the creek which flowed through John Willard's pasture. The cows which were lying in the shade of the sycamore trees continued to chew their cuds placidly, undisturbed by this unusual intrusion. The little group of onlookers who had assembled sang the words "Shall we gather at the river?" One of the elders, a neighbor whom all of us loved, Jesse Jackson, led me into the stream with the silvery minnows darting this way and that, and immersed me into that glorious relationship involving the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

My mother was there, and I suspect her mind went back to the time when she dressed my baby form in the long white christening-dress and carried me so far as to have me christened by the Missouri Synod Lutheran clergyman. But she merely wiped away her tears, and hugged my wet body without saying anything. We climbed into the big wagon in which we were to ride back home, and my wet clothing felt good as the sun's rays beat down upon us. But it was the cool, refreshing feeling inside of me which meant the most. What a thrill to be one spirit with the Lord!

DOWN HOME *with Carl*

The lovely little village of Burnside is a quiet Illinois community of 150 souls, built around a shady park with a bandstand in it. It is just a block square. On one side is a Methodist meetinghouse and on the other, directly across from it, is the new facility of the Christian Church. Both congregations have existed for more than a century. This year they decided to meet together for three nights in the park and bring in someone to proclaim the simple gospel. I was selected and I could write a booklet about it. The audience numbered 250 the final night, more than the population of the place. The attention was excellent and the effect profound . . . Featherstone Christian Camp consists of 160 acres nestled in the mountains thirty miles from San Diego, California. It is completely surrounded by national forests and access is gained by going through an Indian Reservation. Ziden Nutt and myself shared with a group of saints in a family camp from Friday through Monday at the Labor Day vacation. It was a great time of study and inspiration . . . InterVarsity brought me on the grounds at Washington University for a three hour session on the night of September 10. Special efforts were made to invite atheists, skeptics and infidels to attend. The encounter was great, with perfect attention and real confrontation. My theme was "The Way Out is the Way In." . . . We are now engaged in a study of the prophecies every Monday night at Oak Hill Chapel, with people from all religious backgrounds in attendance. In addition we are in the fourteenth year of Tuesday daytime studies to which Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist and other folk from the community come. We eat together at a covered dish luncheon at noon every Tuesday which provides a real opportunity for acquaintance and discussion . . . The Saint Louis Forum will be held at St. Louis Christian College Auditorium, 1360 Grandview Drive, Florissant, Missouri 63033, December 27, 28. The theme is "Renewal and the Restoration Movement." Featured will be speakers from Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ (non-instrument). The audience will be allowed to question the speakers, and one session will be open for brief expressions by those who wish to speak. The subjects are: Things in Which We Need to Make Changes; Barriers to Renewal; Experiences in Renewal; Approaches to Renewal; and Renewal in Relation to Our Original Goals of Unity and Restoration. Housing can be arranged in nearby motels. For information and program contact Charles Boatman at the college address above. His private telephone is (314) 741-9898 . . . We have cancelled the meeting at Hidden Valley Christian Church in Escondido, California, because of the time involved . . . We eagerly trust that you will announce the Fellowship Forum to be conducted at Sunset Ridge Church of Christ, 2367 Brees Boulevard, San Antonio, Texas, January 12-14. I will be speaking each night on the theme of fellowship and unity and in day sessions on Thursday and Friday will answer questions from the audience relative to the theme. The meetings are open to all who love Jesus and His word . . . February 2-4 I am to be at Minnesota Bible College, Rochester, Minnesota. February 16-18 I am scheduled to be at Pacific Christian College, Fullerton, California, through invitation of the Alumni Association . . . On August 15, 1975 we sent out the 1093rd copy of the book *Thoughts on Unity* without obligation to college and university students. On October 1, this year Nell sent out the 342nd free copy of *The Parable of Telstar,* which exhausted our supply. We are now sending a free copy of *The Death of the Custodian* to anyone enrolled in college who will write for it and mention the school where attending. Make announcements to students and let them get in on it. The cost of the book to non-students is $2.95. It deals with law and grace. —*W. Carl Ketcherside, 139 Signal Hill Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63121.*

"Liberty is a beloved discipline." —*Homans*

Travel Letter . . .

IN LINCOLN COUNTRY

I am writing these words in my hotel room in Lincoln, Illinois, where I am giving the B.D. Phillips Lectures at Lincoln Christian College. Writing "on the move" like this is rare for me since I usually have no free time. The lectures, three in all, are on Restoration history and are well received. The college is, of course within the Restoration heritage, related as it is to Christian Churches. This is their first time to choose one outside their part of the Movement to give the lectures, and they are to be commended for such openness. I am sure it would please brother Phillips, who has now gone home. The college generally shows a broader view of things than most of its sister Bible colleges, which is reflected both in its academic ideals and in exposing students to a wide range of influences. They have brought to their campus not only the ubiquitous Elton Trueblood, but the likes of Bruce Metzger and Andrew Blackwood of Princeton (both old profs of mine) and Roland Bainton from Yale. They also have Dr. Robert Ross of the Churches of Christ on their part-time faculty.

Our colleges must do more of this kind of line-crossing. I know of only one instance of a Church of Christ college having a Christian Church brother on its faculty, that being Pepperdine's one-year appointment of Dr. Robert Fife, whom they borrowed from Milligan. That was great, and surely Pepperdine was blessed for doing it. I am also pleased that Pepperdine and Bethany College are co-sponsoring a seminar on Campbell at Bethany, July 7-9.

I told them in my introductory remarks that God surely does not recognize all these churches we make after our own image. In His sight there is no such thing as Church of Christ Churches, Christian Church Churches, and Disciples of Christ Churches, anymore than Baptist Churches or Methodist Churches. There is but one church, one Body, and it has no name. All of us who are in Christ are in that Body, and the sooner we overcome all our sectarian claptrap the sooner we'll understand what the Restoration Movement is all about.

Lincoln is a city of considerable interest for its size, being the only city named for the Great Emancipator *before* he became President. Founded in 1853, the town was named for the popular young lawyer from nearby Springfield who served as circuit judge for this county. Those who chose the name based their decision as much on phonetic value of "Lincoln" as the likeability of the lanky attorney who rode in occasionally to conduct court for them. I am taking a picture back to Texas with me that shows Judge Lincoln christening the town with watermelon juice, an artist's recollection of the event many years after the fact. The old-timers will be hard to convince that there are melons outside Texas big enough to "baptize" any town.

Henry Ford came here years ago and purchased the old frame court house where Lincoln sat on the bench, bearing it away to Dearborn as a museum piece. Years later the Lincoln cult in the area, realizing that they had been taken, created a replica of the original, which now stands on the original sight in all its glory. A museum on the campus of little Lincoln College (to be distinguished from the Christian college) has a roomful of Lincolniana, including some of Mrs. Lincoln's dishes and jewelry, and a replica of the chair the President sat in that fateful evening in the Ford theatre.

My favorite piece however, is a statue of Lincoln as a boy with an open book in his lap, gracing the library grounds. "I shall prepare myself," he is saying, "My chance will come." That reflects a virtue as uncommon in our time as in the 1820's. But "being prepared" still wins out a lot of the time even in our own confused culture, especially if you are black.

The Christian college is getting into the act with plans for a Lincoln prayer chapel, which can serve as one more stop on "the Lincoln trail," which can begin or end at his tomb some 25 miles away. The proposal is moderately controversial. There are still those among us, even here, who tell of how Lincoln may have been baptized by a Campbellite, whisking him away from the White House some dark night or perhaps sometime during the prairie years back in Illinois. It is almost certainly pure myth, but we cherish our myths and do not care to have them challenged. The letter published among us now and again, supposedly penned by the preacher who secretly immersed Lincoln, is surely baseless in fact for lots of reasons. I would be embarrassed for Lincoln scholars to know that any of our folk take this claim seriously.

Anyway, it is no more important that Lincoln was baptized than any other 19th century American or any other President. The myth is born of sectarian pride. "Nixon's the one" that we ought to baptize, if not actually then mythically. Besides, Lincoln 'is going to be saved by his good works, isn't he? Surely one can't save a nation and yet lose his own soul, or can he?

My flight from Dallas to St. Louis (I'm *always* flying to St. Louis!) was not as uneventful as usual. The lady I sat by, young enough to be my daughter (though I'm not old enough to be her father!) has a phobia of flying. I first thought her tenseness was due to my sitting down beside her instead of the handsome young chap that sat elsewhere. She braced herself for takeoff as if she were getting ready for an electric shock. When we climbed into the overcast, where it was as soupy as inside a bowl of mush, she hid her eyes in her hands and turned toward me as if I might free her from her agony. "You will be all right," I assured her, and "I understand," which seemed to help. After all, if God intended us to fly around in a mess of soup like a bunch of wild geese He would have endowed us with wings.

I suggested she watch for the sun, for we would soon be bathed in brightness and that the angry clouds would be far below us, like troubles dropped into a deep pit. As if the pilot had taken the que, the plane at that moment lifted above all the murk and we were free. Life is like that, we decided. We all have to put up with a lot of dark clouds, but we must believe that light will always break through. Believing helps to make it so. For the believer, "the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings," however long be the night. And healing is what Jesus is all about.

The young lady had a fearless landing in St. Louis. She happens to own a paperback bookstore in Dallas, and I plan to accept her invitation to drop in and see her again, on the ground this time.

Before coming on up to Lincoln from St. Louis, I stopped off for the weekend to be with a campus group at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, called Christians Unlimited, led by the able Don Wooters and Phil Orr, and I addressed the Western Heights Christian Church on Lord's day. Jack Knopp is the enabling minister for this group, and that describes him well, for he is one of the few men I know who ministers to a congregation with a view of enabling them to learn to build themselves up in love, as the scriptures direct. His task is not an easy one, for his people see his approach as so different.

Sunday evening I spoke at Reed's Station, near Royalton, where Harold Chastain has been teaching. When he and his family sing for us, which includes his wife Bonnie, I really get turned on, for they are really something else. I told this old congregation that I was pleased to stand where the great Daniel Sommer and J.D. Roady often proclaimed the word, for they take us back to the pioneers of the Movement. This prompted some of the old-timers to start recollecting, but they couldn't recollect as much as I wanted them to. The ones who knew the old stories are dead and there are no records kept. But I must tell you about Herman and Thelms Sims, who meet at this place. I "met" Herman by correspondence and as a reader of this journal. For sometime he has been sending me expositions on biblical themes, painstakingly worked out in beautiful script that betrays his 70-odd years. Seeing that they love and need company as badly as I, I conned them into letting me spend the night with them.

They live like the simple folk I knew as a boy preacher in the backwoods of Tennessee and East Texas. Herman still lives in the house in which he was born back at the turn of the century, and even sleeps in the same bed. Thelma, whose life has been touched by tragedy, has joined him in more recent years. Not as concerned for "progress" as most of us, Herman has not bothered to put either plumbing or electricity in the house (His mother feared the latter), so I had the pleasure of going to my bedroom with a coal oil lamp in hand. I could hardly await the morning since there were antiques all over the place, the lamp light barely revealing their splendor. They take to hiking all through the Ozarks, bringing back wood and stone pieces that blend well with glass ware, dishes, tapestries, and furniture that have become antiques without any effor of their own. "I don't know how long that's been here," Herman would say when I'd ask him about a table or a secretary.

My bed must have been the most unusual that I have ever tried to negotiate with my long frame. Before it unfolds, it stands majestically against the wall, displaying a large magnificent mirror, with fine carved appointments on all sides, done in oak veneer. That piece alone must be worth enough to wire the house for electricity and then some. I retired amidst what seemed to be the gates of splendor. I was surrounded by bric-a-brac, and against one wall stood a stately old organ, beautifully appointed. Thelma's art crafts were everywhere. The last one to sleep in the old bed, or one of the last, was old brother Jesse Love, who was one of our great debaters in those parts in yesteryears.

Thelma operates both a wood and a coal stove in her kitchen. It was a cold morning on those Illinois plains. Sausage and eggs, butter and biscuits, cold cider and hot coffee, honey and syrup never smelled or tasted so good. At the table Herman shared his views of the coming kingdom, the New Jerusalem come down to earth, the Lord's reign in Zion. When he described the conversion of the Jews, their rebuilding of the temple and the reinstitution of animal sacrifices, Thelma raised the question as to why the Jews, now believers in the Messiah, would be offering animal sacrifices since they would then believe Jesus to be the pascal lamb once for all. I was enjoying breakfast too much to do any more than referee, but I thought it was sweet that they could disagree like that without throwing their antiques at each other. Down Texas way she might be expected to "withdraw" from him. That Thelma is no slouch of a thinker. Not only can she ask devastating questions, but she is something of a poetess. It was only when I was about to leave that I learned of this talent, but I took time to look in on her notebook of poems that speak of faith, hope, and charity.

If their home is filled with love and art, their yard is bedecked with flowers and gardens. Several barns are full of old farm equipment, stuff his father used over those acres in a bygone era. It was incredible. I urged him to get the machinery to some museum before something happens to it. There was a wagon that I had seen only in the old Tom Mix movies, still in excellent condition. In another barn was an old Model T pickup, the like of which I do not recall ever seeing. The barns have weathered the years, being sturdily built by strong hands. It was evident that his father had worked hard and had frugally managed to provide for his little family, only to be killed by a hay bailer while young Herman stood by helplessly, neither of them being well acquainted with the new equipment.

These are my kind of folk and how I do love them and all others like them the world over. The day before I had talked to some of the philosophers at the university. I was in Taiwan with one of them, had shared in a lectureship with another, and had worked with a third on a high school pilot course in philosophy. But *these* are my people and they are different, and it is in their home and at their side that I am most comfortable. I can see old Herman now, beside his flickering lamp, writing still another page of exposition on the scriptures. He showed me a dozen or so notebooks full of careful and responsible comments on much of the New Covenant scriptures. And there's Thelma, without even one of the 28 electrical gadgets that we have in our home, writing her poems of love as well as reading her Bible, living as if she has discovered the real point of life.

They are not exactly poor folk, sitting on top of upwards of 100 acres of prime Illinois farm land as they do. They just don't have much income. Herman taught school a few years, but for a long time he has worked at a dry cleaning establishment. Inflation

has cut deeply into their livlihood. Since he has no heirs, I urged him to dispose of some of his land and enjoy more of the comforts of life in these last years, along with some travel that he and Thelma might like to do. Even though Thelma showed signs of liking the idea, I have since had second thoughts.

Why spoil life for them by bringing in a bathroom and a dishwasher? Or electric lights and a vacuum cleaner? There's something about lifting the chimney of a kerosene lamp with one hand, making a cup with the other, and gently blowing oneself into darkness. And in the evening when one is inclined to repair to the outhouse, he can walk a primrose path, lined with flowers on either side. Sitting there with the door ajar, he can look out over the acreage that his father tilled as a young man and where he has worked since childhood, all gloriously bathed by the moonlight. He can then climb into the same bed in which he came into this world, which is staying about as close to mother's womb as is possible. On the nights that one is disinclined to walk the primrose path, there's a "portable," which is closer and more convenient than the most modern bathroom.

And for one who meditates upon the New Jerusalem come down out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband and embellished with all the glory of heaven, realizing that this is for real and it is for him, and that rather soon, what does he care about New York, Istanbul or Taipei? Who cares about seeing the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace when he can anticipate the grandest drama of the ages: angels at the portals of heaven announcing a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Herman, that ain't bad. How I wish those of the world were rich like you, blessed as you are by Him "who became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich." And while I have no way of knowing how the King will put it all together in the Age to Come, if the New Jerusalem *is* here on this earth, all made new, here's hoping that He places you right there where you've been all these years. I repent. Don't sell an acre of it (as if you would!), for that will make it simpler when the angel comes by to give you an eternal title to the place, or for a thousand years, or whatever. But one thing is sure. By then you will have blown out your last lamp, for Jesus will be your light. No darkness, never again, what a blessed thought. Not even in Illinois!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

(This article was intended for last spring, but was delayed! – *the Editor)*

OFFICE NOTES

The post office now charges us 25 cents for each address correction. This is part of the "pay your own way" policy that the government has imposed upon our postal service. This really hurts us, for in our mobile society many people move without informing us. So we must ask you to *please* inform us a week or so in advance of any move you make, giving us *both* your old and new addresses. If you subscribe for someone else, please don't guess at the address or zip code. Leave the zip code off if you do not know it, and we will supply it for you. If you send a list of names, check carefully to make sure the addresses are correct. It is our policy to remove any name from our list when the post office has to inform us of a change of address.

We welcome the continued interest in our bound volumes. We still have available: Single volumes for 1967, 1968, 1970 at 3.50 each; double volumes for 1971-72 at 4.50 and 1973-74 at 4.95. This present volume will be bound with that of 1975 in a new double volume, to be issued early next year. You can place your order now, but you need send no money since we do not yet know the exact price. We will bill you when the book is mailed.

The Six Version Parallel New Testament is a real bargain at 12.95, for you have six translations in one sturdy, leather binding, side by side so that you can read the same passage in all the versions at the same opening. It gives you the KJV, Living, RSV, New English, Phillips, and Jerusalem. It is a handsome 8x11 volume and would make an ideal gift.

Pat Brooks' *Daughters of the King* is not exactly a "women's lib" book, but it does raise questions about the freedom of God's daughters that deserve consideration. Is she always to yield to the sexual demands of her husband? Must every Christian woman be under the authority of a man? It speaks to the woman who is faced with abnormal demands from her husband. It is a hard-hitting, no-nonsense presentation. 3.10 in paperback.

K.C. Moser was one of the first among us to relate baptism to the grace of God. He was a "liberal" before that term began to circulate in that he lifted the plan of salvation from its legalistic context. We can supply his now highly esteemed *The Way of Salvation* for 3.65.

Love Therapy, by Paul Morris, recognizes the Bible as a medicine chest for spiritual and mental ills. It is a real blessing to the depressed and discouraged, and it speaks to people who have inner problems, which includes us all. It presents "A Challenge to Legalism" that really comes alive. 3.10 in paperback.

Disciple, by Juan Carlos Ortiz, was handed to me by a friend. I was so impressed that we now have them in stock for our readers. It will help you to serve the Lord in the joy of the Holy Spirit. He writes one chapter after reading all the Psalms in one sitting. It will thrill you. 1.90 in paperback.

Over 500,000 copies of *Dare to Discipline* have been sold, and we have sold several of these ourselves. A Christian psychologist offers urgent advice to parents and teachers. His chapter on "A Moment for Mom" presents five suggestions for a better life for the mother. The first one is *Reserve time for yourself.* This book is super. 3.10 in paperback.